

VOL. 26
SERIAL No. 288

FEB.
1946

The LABOUR ORGANISER

Published by
THE LABOUR PARTY

PRICE 4d. (Monthly)
post free 5d.
5/- per annum

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Are Streaming
Into
The Party**
See George Shepherd—
Pages 8 and 9

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The Labour Organiser

PUBLISHING OFFICE : TRANSPORT HOUSE, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1
 Communications to be addressed to the Labour Party

Vol. 26. No. 288

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Price 4d.
 5/- per annum, post free

Approach To Youth

It is commonly agreed that the youth of Britain voted overwhelmingly in support of the Labour Party at the last General Election.

What attracted the young people to the Labour Party was its carefully drawn-up and easily-understood programme of reform. Very few of the young electors were bothered about the prejudices against the Labour Party which scared their fathers in the early part of the century.

Now that the Forces are being demobilised and overtime in the workshops is being largely cancelled, there is an approach to the Labour Party as a political organisation. This accounts very largely for the greatly-increased Individual Membership reported throughout the country. In many places, also, boys and girls below the voting age are displaying an anxiety to engage in politics, and, as a result branches of the Labour Party League of Youth are being started in many constituencies.

The National Executive has recently had the whole question under consideration and has decided to make certain suggestions to Constituency Labour Parties.

The Committee appreciates the differences of opinion that exist about the organisation of young people into separate bodies; differences which were very well put in last month's "Labour Organiser" by Harry Wickham and Jack Cutler, and again this month by John Anson. It will, therefore, try to steer a course as the occasion may require.

To the Constituency Parties anxious

to form branches of the League, it will offer advice of the kind of work to be undertaken and the tutelage to be extended to the branch members.

To Constituency Parties which believe in enrolling young people directly into Party membership it will urge that the work of Constituency Parties must be modified to enable young people to play their full part. A circular embodying both will be issued shortly.

If youth and age are to work together all the time, older members must accommodate themselves to enlarging Party activities, and the young members must be encouraged to take upon themselves more and more of the work involved.

Constituency Parties should divide their main activities under several heads, and having decided what they require done should appoint Committees to act on the instructions given to them. The appointment of Committees for separate functions, subject only to the need for reporting to the General Management Committee, would considerably enlarge the number of persons involved in Party management.

If adopted it would enable the number of general business meetings to be reduced and thus provide members with opportunities, at meetings organised for the purpose, to engage in political discussions of all kinds. The young require a Party in which youth can expand and flourish.

It is to be hoped that every Constituency Party on receiving the National Executive's document, will give prompt consideration to its proposals.

ARE WE OBSESSED WITH NUMBERS ?

Let's Have Quality First

By Councillor M. L. BURNET (Hampstead L.P.)

There is usually to be found a fleeting reference to quality in Party pronouncements on membership and Party work generally, amidst the main bulk of the matter which deals with quantity.

Keener minds within the Party do not overlook the place that quality plays, no doubt, but this is neither true of a considerable proportion of the total membership, nor is it a main consideration in guiding many a local party in its work.

Indeed, in a number of D.L.P.s the assessment of Party work is purely statistical in character. So many members won, so many lost, deduct transfers and removals, result, so and so; a positive balance indicating progression, a negative, retrogression.

Each ward is checked and assessed according to a formula, the district is surveyed closer and closer to reveal any occupational propensity to Party membership in any quarter, and plans devised to enrol the last few dozen persons who can be harassed into parting with 6d. per month.

One can seem to hear the baying of the hounds. All very efficient, no doubt, but it is a pity that they are dealing with human beings!

To many parties such a picture as the foregoing is but an aspiration owing to the lack of will and means. These parties have neither quantitative nor cumulative factors to recommend them.

Are They Any Use?

Dickens, with his immortal portrait of the statistics addict, Gradgrind, in "Hard Times," sufficiently exploded the fallacy of the purely quantitative approach to problems, but it is a lesson that not all have learnt.

When the membership secretary informs his committee that 100 new members have been made for the month, or whatever the figure may be, someone should inquire whether any of them are, or are likely to be, of any use.

The quantitative approach is not confined merely to the getting of members. So many meetings held, so many committees, so much literature sold, so

many seats won on the local council one hears. All excellent provided the meetings are good meetings, the right literature is sold to the right people, and the right people elected to the council. It is pathetic to find people estimating the value of a committee meeting on the basis of whether it conformed to standing orders or no.

Deifying the Machinery

This prevailing quantitative approach in the Party is partly due to naïveté. With the first realisation that the potentiality of membership of the Party is not fortuitous in character, but that every street of a certain character will yield a harvest of members for the reaping, comes the corollary of organising that reaping on the most methodical basis possible.

Everything else recedes into the background, the organisational machine is deified, and statistics becomes the criteria on which all activity is judged. The short-coming here is the type of brain that can only apprehend one factor at a time and turns an asset into a liability. It is the very success of the membership-making that allows the place of other relevant factors to be usurped.

The opposite absurdity to this is the armchair party of weak membership strength that devotes most of its time to passing wordy resolutions, often with the assistance of the local C.P., on the state of the universe.

There is a factor in the ideology of the Party which tends to idealisation of numbers as well. As the Party of the masses in contradistinction to the Parties of the Right, representing narrower interests, numbers seem all-important.

A too-literal transcription of this factor leads to the "head counting" absurdity; an unwise committee decision, for example, will be justified on the ground that it was an expression of the will of the majority. There is even a certain jealousy shown towards the talented member, he being labelled a "careerist," with mutterings about MacDonald, by members to whom this epithet might more justly be applied.

(Continued on page 11)

LAST WORD ON "WHAT WINS ELECTIONS"

I Stick To My Guns

By TOM GITTINS

I enjoyed the articles by Clem Jones and Hinley Atkinson in the last issue of the "Labour Organiser," particularly as they so neatly cancel each other out! The former uses percentages to suggest that candidates count for more than the 5% value I gave them, while the latter concludes that "the factors which determine an election result are too inter-related to assess in definite or even approximate vote percentages." In short, Hinley Atkinson rejects the very method used by Clem Jones to refute me. I suggest they get together to compose their differences!

Of course, Atkinson's conclusion is far too sweeping. A serious and detailed study of the various factors which influence elections, and an attempt to assess them in relation to each other, can lead to conclusions which may well affect the tactics and strategy of an election campaign. My report, with its very tentative estimates was a modest attempt to disentangle these factors *in so far as they relate to the Farnham Constituency*, and to assess what steps must be taken to achieve victory there at the next election. My conclusion was that *given the appropriate organisation*, victory could be won.

Defeatist

To deny that there is any value in the study of the mechanics (as the basis of the dynamics) of electioneering is both defeatist and reactionary.

In detail, Atkinson disputes my contention that of the four factors, *type of constituency* is "least amenable to attempts at modification." Yet in the preceding sentence he admits in effect that economic environment and social conditions largely determine the way the electorate will vote. Does he really suggest that this basic environment is more amenable to modification than the other three more fluid factors?

In Farnham there was only the slightest modification of the factor, *type of constituency*. The drastic increase in the Labour vote was undoubtedly due mainly to the factor, the general political situation. The

appalling record of Tory misrule and the catastrophic results involved, plus the straightforward and reasonable policy outlined in Labour's "Let us face the future," combined to produce, for the Labour Party, a favourable attitude in the minds of the electorate. If some of our own people had grasped this elementary and obvious fact, they would not have been expressing the defeatist opinion, prior to the election, that Labour *might* scrape home with a narrow majority!

Atkinson's argument that the political situation can only really be assessed after the electorate has registered its decision, is downright nonsense, and dangerous nonsense at that. A refusal to estimate the probabilities in a political situation may well warp the whole approach to an election campaign.

Candidate's Value

Both Clem Jones and Hinley Atkinson attack my estimate of the Candidate as a factor in the campaign. The latter asks derisively whether I, as a candidate, can give myself only 630 out of 21,000 Labour votes. He suggests this is due to excessive modesty on my part. On the contrary, if I were convinced that I personally had actually induced 630 people to vote Labour, people who ordinarily would not have done so, I should indeed be a proud and happy candidate.

Is it not high time that people like Jones and Atkinson realised that people vote for things (for parties and policies) and not for persons and that it is quite possible for a first-class candidate to spend himself unavailingly in one constituency while a party hack and yes-man can romp home in another?

No, I regard 5% as a generous estimate of the personal contribution of a candidate to an election.

Dangerous Thoughts!

For the rest I was frankly puzzled that Atkinson should regard as "unworthy" my statement that "the Conservative Party can achieve political power again *only* on the basis of the Labour Government's betrayal of its mandate from the people." Presumably he resents the suggestion that

there is any *possibility* of a Labour Government failing to fulfil its election pledges. He really must learn to distinguish between a statement of possibility as opposed to one of probability.

To adopt the attitude that a betrayal of mandate is not even *possible* and to characterise as "treacherous" any data upon which this possibility is discussed, betrays a dangerously intolerant approach to the problem of politics. If Atkinson indulges in these illogicalities, he will soon be wondering whether I ought to be excluded from the Labour Party for harbouring dangerous thoughts! For his peace of mind, I will state that while I believe it is possible for *any* Government including this Labour Government, to betray its mandate, I also believe that

in this instance, it is extremely improbable.

Finally, Atkinson also resents apparently my statement about the "forward march of the working classes urged on irresistibly by the inescapable demands of historical necessity." He says this is grandiloquent. Whether he refers to the style or content of my sentence, I don't know. If the former, I am inclined to agree with him, although I will send a fiver to his pet charity if he can put the idea adequately in fewer syllables; and if the latter, then clearly he cannot be conversant with the laws of motion of capitalist society.

And there, as Mr. Atkinson himself rather grandiloquently concludes, we leave it.

The Way Out For Our Youth

By JOHN T. ANSON

The General Election produced an influx of young people into the Local Parties in several places and the local officers, with the customary conservatism of our race, have naturally turned to the form of organisation tried in the past—the development of a branch of the Labour League of Youth.

It is striking that this approach should be made when the rather bitter and certainly disappointing results of the past are still in our minds. From the whole of my experiences and those of my colleagues comes the same story of abject failure in relation to the time, energy and money spent in the endeavour to establish in any effective fashion the organisation of youth.

Many claims are made for the success of other political and social organisations in their endeavours to organise the young people, none, apart from the Scout, Cadet and Boys' Brigade movements, have survived the test of time.

A uniform, band, and an orientation of play and work not possible under a political organisation appear to be essential factors of success. Yet these only become effective when they are coupled with adult leadership which in the main has become specialised, their only pivot of social activity being the Youth.

Why We Failed

Experiences have taught that any attempt of a political organisation to organise youth has meant an endeavour

to place old heads on young shoulders; to give to those of the "teens" the mind and approach of those of the late twenties to the sixties. How else can political consciousness be created in the minds of those who in general are thinking of pictures, football, dancing and social life which gives thrills and the working off of surplus energy? In the minority there are those who without effort dig deeper into life and the modern educational system, with all its defects, provides the facilities which express opportunity in life in the future. It was from the latter group the Party drew its politically active assets from the old L.O.Y. a section which would have come into the movement if there had been no Youth organisation.

Discipline Needed

Youth of all eras have one thing in common: they cannot avoid being young. Their natural bent is to the thrill and excitement on the one hand and to imitate their elders and heroes on the other. The first leads to ineffective organisation in a political sense, we do provide occasions of excitement at odd times, but not at all times. The exceptions, of whom I must be one, to the general rule of seeking thrills, quickly, in my experience, find that organisation with normal youth unpalatable and seek the companionship of the older age groups with whom

they are much more at home. These are the fruits of the old League and they are very rare.

Political organisation cannot be conducted successfully unless there is a sense of discipline among its members, a discipline different in degree from the normal conception of the term. Youth, in general, is not fitted for the acceptance of that discipline and cannot be until they have gone through the "mill" of life to a greater degree than their age allows.

All who think of youth with its energy, fire, and natural sense of irresponsibility must agree that old heads cannot be placed successfully on young shoulders and unless it is political activity is impossible.

The Way Out

The more the question is examined the more it must be agreed that to exclude by any means the youth from some association with the Party would be a terrible mistake. To say that does not necessarily imply that Constit-

tutional provision must be made for them, nor does it mean separate and special organisation must be established. Any proposals made should take into account the elementary human fact that the youth are possessed of all the attributes of the young and cannot be made old.

It is suggested, therefore, encouragement should be given to Parties to examine ways and means of associating the youth of their district with the Party by means of establishing, where a need exists, social activity for the youth without giving them a constitutional standing and "rights of membership."

Those whose bent it is to think and act older than their years will, as now, quickly find their way into the ranks of the Ward Committee or Women's Section. It is then our duty to see to it that they receive sympathetic handling by those of us who are no longer eligible constitutionally for membership of the L.O.Y.

Honourable Mentions

To the Blackpool Labour Party for the beautifully-illustrated New Year Greetings brochure they sent out to their membership, advertising local events. Paper, printed material and photographs were all first-rate, the whole thing was admirably designed to put the Party over.

To Gordon Sandison, Southend's prospective candidate, for his pointed and pithy News Letter to constituents. This is a regular issue and it seems to get better every time.

Scottish Year Book

To the Scottish Labour Party for their excellent Year Book, first of its kind and already a best seller. Features are a verbatim report of the Prime Minister's address to the Scottish Conference, a comprehensive survey of the Scottish General Election results, and a useful list of D.L.P. secretaries. Price is one shilling.

To David R. Hardman, M.P. for Darlington and Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education. His neat New Year News Letter is a model for other M.P.s to follow.

To Jim Simmons, M.P. for West Birmingham, for his Quarterly Letter to constituents. Jim holds the grand

record of having attended this Parliament every day it has sat.

To Harry Wickham, West Midlands Organiser, for the first-rate material he has sent round to D.L.P.s on all aspects of the county council elections. Items covered include paper, petrol, speakers, and a specimen election address.

To St Marylebone Divisional Labour Party for their neat, new-style membership form. Printed on the back is Clause IV of the Party Constitution, giving the Party aims.

Lively Youth Group

To Stourbridge Labour Party Youth Discussion Group for attracting 30 to 40 lively, intelligent young people to their weekly Sunday evening meetings. Other youth groups might well consider Sunday nights also.

To Faversham Divisional Labour Party for a fine annual report and balance sheet and a fine year of progress. There has been a notable revival among the women's and youth sections. A children's dance class at Sheerness has been most successful.

To Kingston Borough Labour Party for a record-breaking year. No less than 555 new members were enrolled and 15 borough council gains chalked up.

DEMOBBED—THEY'RE

THE GREAT MEMBER-

250,000 MORE CARDS ON ORDER

No excuse is made in again referring to Individual Membership. Indeed, if we were reluctant to do so, we could not avoid some brief words about it, if only for the reason that recruitment is proceeding apace throughout the country.

The first stock of Membership Cards has been exhausted though the print on this occasion made full allowance for last year's startling growth. An order for 250,000 additional cards has now been made, and even this substantial number may have to be repeated as the 1946 Membership Drive gets under way.

Perhaps one of the most interesting new points arising in correspondence is due to the large number of demobbed men and women who apparently on their first contact with civilian life deem it essential to enter the Labour Party's ranks.

This should give all of us enormous pleasure, because, despite the difficulties confronting the Government, and the awkward matters arising from day to day, the approach to the Labour Party by men and women who have been through the fire, indicates that they are not expecting a completely smooth future, and are prepared to do their utmost to keep the Ship of State afloat.

We are now receiving the Half-yearly Reports of Constituency Agents, and as a matter of interest we are extracting their references to Individual Membership. We believe that they will attract the attention not merely of Constituency Agents themselves, but that of many key workers who are now subscribers to the "Labour Organiser." We will not apologise for their length.

Windsor.—A difficult constituency, with a new agent, L. G. Sims. Finished the year with 781 members, and with plans in hand for a Membership Drive following the Spring Elections.

Wirral.—Another difficult constituency with a new agent, H. N. Silver, on 31st December possessed 1,750 individual members, 950 being men and

800 women. The agent says "we are endeavouring with some success to use the snowball method of increasing membership, and we propose to run a divisional propaganda week which will include film show meetings as a prelude to a mass canvass, door-to-door membership campaign based upon Election records.

Iford.—Formerly a great anti-Labour stronghold, divided into two constituencies prior to the General Election, and both won by the Labour Party. The area now has 2,324 members, of whom 1,320 are men and 1,004 women. A healthy determination is expressed to increase this membership to approximate mere nearly Labour's voting strength in the two divisions. With a veteran, but still a first-class agent, R. T. Holmes, it should be done.

Bristol North.—Again won by the Labour Party after some years in the Tory wilderness, reports an increase of 130 members for the past half year, with a door-to-door canvass in each ward or polling district proposed in the near future. The agent is W. J. Waring.

Bristol West.—Not yet won by Labour, with a new agent, J. H. Knight, reports an individual membership of 753, with a ward campaign for additional membership already planned.

Gloucester.—With a newly-appointed agent, F. Davenport, reports a membership increase from 207 to 537 in 1945, with a target to be reached under the chain system of recruitment of one thousand members by July next.

Rochdale.—Started 1945 with less than 200 members. With a new agent, H. T. Wilcock, by 31st December it had risen to seven hundred members. Plans have been made to meet a target of 4,000 members in stages, i.e. 1,500 by May Day and 2,000 by next November, and so on. The agent is Sydney Stout.

Warrington.—Continues to maintain its membership at a stable level of 900 to 1,000. The bugbear in this con-

IN THE PARTY NOW SHIP DRIVE GOES WELL

By GEORGE R. SHEPHERD, National Agent

stituency has been lack of collectors, but efforts are being made to overcome the trouble. George Hindle continues as agent.

Clitheroe.—Agent Belben reports a new membership of 2,612 comprising 1,392 men and 1,220 women. Mr. Belben has established a moderate target of 3,000 members for 1946, moderate for him.

North-East Bethnal Green.—Is arranging under H. J. Tate, a membership drive following the L.C.C. elections, and to coincide with better weather. The present membership is 400 men and 200 women.

North-West Camberwell.—Mrs. B. M. Harris reports 1,000 members, 300 of which were made during the recent Borough Council Elections. The L.C.C. elections are to be used for the same purpose.

West Lewisham.—Now returning a Labour Member of Parliament for the first time claims an individual membership of 1,306. This constituency is dormitory in character, and apparently that fact does not indicate any weakness in Labour's position. Mr. Bellamy, the agent, is newly-appointed.

Bow and Bromley.—George Lansbury's old division finished the year with 575 members, being an increase of 316 since the General Election. This war-stricken area is rising superior to its difficulties, and it is planning to reach the thousand mark in the next twelve months. Agent S. Norman is in charge.

Woolwich East and West.—Continues its great traditions under the leadership of its agent, Mabel Crout. The two constituencies had between them 4,895 individual members good on the books on 31st December. The subscriptions paid by these members amounted to £832. Woolwich does not accept the view that because its members are working men and women, it should aim low for safety!

Newcastle Central.—Mr. A. A. Johnson, formerly agent for Swindon, went to Newcastle Central in May last. He

reports that the individual membership of a few dozen now reaches 300 men and women.

Wansbeck.—Dan Dawson, one of our oldest agents, keeps a good individual membership in a mining division year by year. He reports a total of 1,737 for 1945, consisting of 918 men and 819 women. He is willing to prove that membership recruitment in mining divisions is not an impossibility.

Shrewsbury.—Mr. C. H. Williams, appointed in August, 1945, is showing that this west of England party has something more than a desert to develop in. Commencing with 100 members last year, 560 members were obtained before the year ended, and the party is now after its target of 1,250.

Aston.—The Agent, Mr. Jim Meadows, reports 626 members for 1945. Each member is urged to make a "New Member a Month" under a slogan set before them by Aston's Labour Member of Parliament.

King's Norton.—This constituency, agent J. H. Nash, is the best organised in the City of Birmingham. Its target for 1946 is 3,000. The object is not an impossible one as there are already 992 men and 832 women on the books. A feature of the work in this division is the willingness of party members to carry through ambitious activities in full co-operation with one another.

Nuneaton.—Prior to the General Election, this constituency lost a large voting strength to enable the City of Coventry to constitute two constituencies. Notwithstanding this division, the male membership of the party increased from 1,200 to 1,487, although the women membership declined from 2,274 to 1,069. This lapse is more apparent than real because Coventry took over women's sections in full operation. Nuneaton has now 3,116 individual members, with A. Brown, the agent, in command.

Halifax.—Mr. E. G. Carr, who went there in April last from Central Hull, looks like maintaining a good level of

individual members in this well-organised town. 1,600 members are already enrolled and the target for the next campaign is 2,000.

Huddersfield.—Mr. Gardiner reports 941 members with a big summer campaign of recruitment in prospect.

Colne Valley.—This is a very special constituency with a new agent, Arthur Turner who succeeded that old stalwart Sam Eastwood in October last says there were 951 individual members in December, but a target of 4,000 has been fixed for recruitment during the spring and summer months. This is not surprising. The material out of

which the 4,000 must be built not only exists in the constituency, but has done so for more than a generation.

Doncaster.—Mr. M. C. Emerson, the agent of this party reports an increase from 1,038 to 1,229.

Keighley.—Yorkshire men, as a rule, do not require the assistance of outsiders to manage their affairs for them. Keighley did, however, appoint a Londoner, Mr. W. A. Brown, as its agent in October, 1944. Since then the individual membership has grown slowly but surely to six hundred members, whilst the wards have already reported increases for 1946.

London “Features” L.C.C. Leader

After a long period of spirited leadership from Herbert Morrison in London Government, it almost startles old campaigners to note the featuring of a new leader, Charlie, now the Rt. Hon. Lord Latham.

Not every Local Government area would accept a Municipal Campaign, even when backed by noble work and a fine programme, in which a principal feature is the dramatisation of the leader of the Party. Indeed, in most parts of the country such a campaign is unnecessary and might be a little bit farcical. London, however, is an entirely different proposition. Its size in area, its numbers in terms of the electorate, and the general aloofness of Londoners one from the other, forces a campaign much nearer to the Parliamentary model than elsewhere. The London Labour Party in respect of its leader, is extremely lucky. Herbert Morrison, now leading the House of Commons, has been succeeded by another great Local Government man, Charlie Latham.

Campaign H.Q.

The London Labour Party undertakes the full leadership of the County Council Election Campaign. Its offices at Westminster Bridge Road are as busy in the County Council Elections as are those of the National Executive Committee at Transport House, during a Parliamentary General Election. The London Labour Party provides the greater part of the literature used, and on this occasion it has excelled itself in the services it is rendering in print.

The Election Address in two colours

is universally used with suitable local matter for each constituency. There is a threepenny illustrated booklet giving publicity to the very full record of the Labour majority on the L.C.C., an Election Manifesto making an arousing appeal to the Electors, and illustrated posters and pamphlets have been printed in large quantities.

Principal Planks

The principal planks on this occasion are the re-housing of Londoners and the education of London children. Particular emphasis is placed on slum clearances. In five years to September 1939, Labour demolished 12,652 slum dwellings and rehoused 82,999 people, whereas the Municipal Reformers in a similar period to March 1934 only demolished 2,386 slum dwellings, and re-housed 17,144 people.

The mechanical side of the campaign is once more in the capable hands of Hinley Atkinson, and the documents issued by him on the conduct of the elections are of a very high order. Mention must be made of a voluminous programme to cover election preparations; a guide to the legal points involved and a very useful timetable of action for the chief clerks. Surely no chief clerk in these contests is likely to lose his way if he has taken to heart the skilful directions given.

The campaign is a determined bid not only for continued power, but for greater power. Of the sixty seats returning two Members each, fifty-nine are being contested, with fighting candidates of one hundred and eighteen strong.

The New Fighting Front

At the January meeting of the National Executive Committee, the prospective candidature of Mr. G. R. Sandison for Southend-on-Sea was duly endorsed. The event has significance for two reasons. Firstly, Mr. Sandison's selection and endorsement are the first of their kind for the next General Election.

Though other constituencies are on the move, no invidious distinction is being made in thus singling out Southend-on-Sea for honourable mention. Secondly, Southend-on-Sea has been a negligible factor in estimating Labour's growth to power at General Elections of the past. The constituency has, however, sprung suddenly into serious reckoning, for in July last, Labour polled 20,635 votes and only missed victory by 3,077 votes.

Southend's Labour electoral record is as follows :—

1924	3,144
1927	4,777
1929	No Labour candidate
1931	7,741
1935	7,796
1945	20,635

Incidentally, the County of Essex, in which Southend-on-Sea is situated, has a proud record. There are twenty-six Parliamentary constituencies in the county. With the exception of Woodford, Mr. Churchill's seat, and Chelmsford, they were all fought by Labour candidates at the General Election.

Only two Labour Candidates failed to secure election to Parliament, namely at Harwich and Southend. Chelmsford, however, elected a Common Wealth candidate who is expected shortly to join the Labour Party.

Got a Copy?

Conduct of Local Elections. (England and Wales). 1 copy, 1/3d., post free; 6 copies, 6/-, post free; 12 copies, 10/-, post free. A new edition of this booklet is now available.

It is a guide on the procedure and law relating to County Council, Municipal, District and Parish Elections, and is compiled specially for the use of candidates and election officers, in a methodical and straightforward way.

Every local party should order copies for its candidates and officers, so that mistakes and lapses are avoided and the legal conduct of the elections may be in order.

Labour Agents in Greece

The forthcoming elections in Greece are of high international importance. Not only are the Greeks themselves interested in the outcome but it is clear from discussions in the Security Council of the United Nations Organisation that the governments of many countries are intensely concerned with the repercussions on their respective Foreign Policies.

The elections are to be supervised by Commissions appointed by the Governments of France, United States, and Great Britain, in which latter mission South Africa is to play a part. Each mission will have under its control a body of service personnel who will receive training in their duties from their respective commissions.

The British mission is made up of election agents nominated by the main political parties. The chairman is Mr. R. T. Windle, Assistant National Agent, and the following Labour Party agents are serving with him.

A. J. Herbert, Central Wandsworth; Ald. J. W. Foster, Durham; E. V. Rees, Bristol; R. Ley, Newport; C. Thallion, York; J. W. Horan, Liverpool.

The British mission is now in Athens and they carry with them the best wishes of their colleagues and of the Party as a whole.

(Continued from Page 4)

Numbers Aren't Everything

By all means let us have first-class organisation, the measure of our success being dependent to a large degree on this factor. But let it be ancillary to our purpose and policies and not the prime factor.

We must put quality in the front rank and make it our first consideration always in all our work. Quantity is important, too, but within limits. Unlike a trade union or trade association, 100 per cent. membership should not be the ideal.

There is an optimum figure of membership of parties somewhere below the highest figure obtainable. A great deal of the success of organising lies in having the discretion to perceive this optimum, in insuring that within this optimum membership the highest quality resides, and in instituting a programme which translates this abstract quality into a fruitful reality in the policies pursued.

Our New By-Election Specials

By COLIN MACPHEE

As an experiment Head Office has arranged a new publicity service for constituency parties which are faced with Parliamentary by-election contests. This is the production of an illustrated by-election special.

Although these specials cost a deal of money, I think the local parties are agreed that they are worth while. We started off at North Tottenham and have now produced specials for Preston, South Ayrshire, Cathcart, and Heywood and Radcliffe.

We have tried to get away as far as possible from the old stereotyped idea of an election special, and produce something that will be attractive to look at and easy to read.

One first essential is that good quality paper must be used, and this, of course, is one of the reasons for the relatively high cost. Newsprint simply will not do, as the blocks will not reproduce properly.

So far we have been fortunate in the choice of our printer, who, of course, should be local. The Guardian Press at Preston and the Scottish Wholesale Co-operative Society for Cathcart did particularly fine printing jobs for us.

FILLIP FOR FINAL WEEK

The cost has varied a good deal. In some cases it was around £60 for a run of 40,000 and in others it went over the £100 mark.

But local party people are convinced that the specials pay their way and give a needed fillip to the campaign during the last week before polling day.

In some of the specials, which are a crown double fold size, we have used as many as 16 blocks, so it will be seen that we have tried to break up the reading matter as much as possible.

In the general editorial contents, we have tried to stress the constructive achievements of the Labour Government and not concern ourselves overmuch with the past misdeeds of the Tories. This, I think, is the paying line to pursue in the country at the moment.

We have tried to keep off local issues, as these sometimes befog the real question at by-elections, which should, of course, be a vote for or against the Government. In the Scottish specials, however, we managed to include some purely Scottish material.

TIME FACTOR

We heard rumours of a Tory riposte to our specials in a number of the divisions, but so far as I know nothing materialised. At Preston they apparently got on the job too late, as a number of definite inquiries were made.

This brings me to the question of the time factor. It will help greatly if local parties who are faced with by-elections would let us know well in advance whether or not they want a special produced.

It is best to have them available for distribution at least a week before the poll. This means we should know at least three weeks before polling whether the broadsheet is required.

In some scattered areas, such as South Ayrshire, for instance, distribution is undoubtedly a problem. Our workers are usually, however, cheered by the arrival of attractive literature and so far we have found no difficulty in getting the material out to the voters.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As the Tory campaign hots up against the Government at the by-elections, there is no doubt the Opposition will throw in everything they have. At Preston I thought they were particularly energetic and cocky, but the result showed, as indeed all the by-election results have shown, that the Government is more than holding its own.

Nevertheless, we cannot take things too much for granted and Head Office will be glad to help local parties in every way possible in these important by-election battles. But let us have your problems and suggestions early, please.



MORTON'S FOR STATIONERY

Write for samples and new List of ENVELOPES, DUPLICATING PAPERS, STENCILS, INKS, TYPEWRITER RIBBONS and CARBONS, etc. as supplied to scores of Labour Party and Trade Union Offices.
MORTON'S, 52 TULSE HILL - LONDON, S.W.2

Booking Speakers: New Plans

The National Executive Committee has recently given serious consideration to the subject of platform propaganda — both in relation to past practices and to those thought most suitable for the new times we live in.

Hitherto the main responsibility for the booking of speakers has fallen upon the national agent's department where John Pinkerton has done the detail work involved. Although there has been some criticism, the department has striven to carry through its duties fairly and evenly with personnel not under its absolute control.

Perhaps in the days when Labour Members of Parliament were few, the National Agent's Department was the only possible channel through which bookings could be made with a fair measure of success and a fair distribution of services maintained throughout the country. The changed conditions in Parliament however and the creation of Regional Councils open up other possibilities and it is upon these factors that the National Executive Committee has reached certain conclusions.

Firstly, the main platform propaganda work of the Party as distinct from the use of local speakers must be carried out by Members of Parliament in their own constituencies. By this means apart from special gatherings 400 of the 600 constituencies will be provided for.

Regional Arrangements

Secondly, the constituencies not having Members of Parliament will, in addition to the services of their Parliamentary candidates and local speakers, secure platform support from Members of Parliament for neighbouring Divisions by arrangements made with the Regional Councils. *In effect this will mean that a good deal of the responsibility for an interchange of speakers will devolve from Transport House to the Regional Offices.*

Thirdly, Head Office will continue to be responsible for the platform work of Ministers and Party Leaders. In their cases, despite the fact that they may be local to some region, it becomes necessary to arrange a fair allocation of their services over all regions. It follows, therefore, that the task involved must be done by an organisation centralised nationally.

Fourthly, Members of Parliament and other speakers who have acquired a national reputation or who have become specialists in various subjects form a distinct category for service distribution from Transport House. Here, again, as in the case of Ministers, etc., their dates must be spread over the whole country.

It is hoped, therefore, under the new arrangements, by widening and multiplying the number of channels through which speakers can be engaged, to provide the fullest possible facilities to Constituency Parties, to County Federations and to Regional Councils.

Platform Propaganda Still Potent

Within the last few years, owing to counter-attractions like the wireless and the cinema, many people have held the view that the days of platform propaganda have passed. There has been much argument about it, and at times, a good deal of scepticism has been expressed about public meetings at organisation conferences, etc.

Unless we are much mistaken, however, the next few years will prove that platform propaganda, even though it reaches audiences of smaller dimensions than the press or the wireless, is one of the most powerful factors in forming political opinion.

If the above should be the case, then speakers of all kinds will have to treat their audiences with proper respect. They will need to give the fullest possible attention to the subjects upon which they are to speak and they will have to assume more than ever that, within those audiences, there may be men and women with knowledge and experience sufficient to make their speeches seem inadequate or ridiculous unless they have been thoroughly prepared and intelligently delivered.

Councillor R. H. Ley, secretary of the Agents' Union, is now in Greece with the Mission which is observing the Greek elections

In his absence members should send their communications to Mrs. M. E. Smith, c/o 84, Stow Hill, Newport, Mon.

Petrol for Party Purposes

The Ministry of Fuel and Power has decided to introduce a revised scheme, giving more liberal petrol allowances to Constituency Parties on the basis of block grants to cover the joint requirements of *Agents, Prospective Parliamentary Candidates and other Party Officers*. Details of the scheme are as under:—

1. As Members of Parliament receive allowances of petrol direct it has been decided to differentiate between the block grant to the Party holding the seat and an opposition Party which requires petrol for a *Prospective Candidate.

2. Borough Constituences.

(i) Party holding the seat: up to 700 miles per month for use by the Agent and other Officers. Member of Parliament has separate allowance.)

(ii) Opposition Party with no Prospective Candidate: up to 700 miles per month for use by the Agent and other Officers.

(iii) Opposition Party with a Prospective Candidate: up to 1,000 miles per month for use by the Agent, Prospective Candidate and other Officers.

3. County Constituences.

(i) Party holding the seat: up to 1,400 miles per month for use by the Agent, and other Officers. Member of Parliament has separate allowance.)

(ii) Opposition Party with no Prospective Candidate: up to 1,400 miles per month for use by the Agent and other Officers.

(iii) Opposition Party with a Prospective Candidate: up to 2,000 miles per month for use by the Agent, Prospective Candidate and Officers.

4. Extra-large Constituences.

Where the area of a Constituency exceeds 150,000 acres the block grant may be increased by 10 per cent. for each additional 50,000 acres or part thereof.

5. The application for the block grant will be made by the Constituency Agent, and since the needs of constituencies differ, according to their size and the amount of political activity prevailing, the estimated essential mileage will be certified by the District Organiser.

6. The allowance will be calculated on the basis of 24 miles per gallon.

7. As under the previous scheme, a Constituency Agent is deemed to cover whole time, or part-time unpaid voluntary officers.

8. The Constituency Agent will be responsible to the Regional Petroleum Officer for the proper use of the Block Grant. He will return unused coupons and will report on the manner in which coupons have been used.

9. *Rationing periods.* Block grants will be issued for four-monthly periods, the first being for the months of January-April. This will necessitate an adjustment in the block grant for those Constituencies which have already obtained coupons for this period under the previous scheme.

Example: Borough Constituency.

Opposition Party with no Prospective Candidate. Application by Constituency Agent for supplementary allowance by way of a block grant to cover February, March and April. Essential monthly mileage certified by District Organiser is 600 miles per month.

units	
1,800 miles at 24 miles per gallon	75
Less $\frac{3}{4}$ of allowance already issued to Constituency Agent (say)	37

Reduced Block Grant 38

10. The Block Grants to be issued under this scheme are not intended to cover residential travelling. In all other respects the conditions of the previous scheme will continue to apply.

11. It will be necessary for an application form to be completed for each rationing period. Constituency Agents should either retain a copy of the enclosed application form for future use, or submit a simple letter based on the requirements of this form. *In either case the application must be sent to the appropriate District Officer of the Party who will sign the necessary certificate and forward the application to the Regional Petroleum Officer.*

* Where a person is expected to be re-selected as a Parliamentary Candidate at a later date, he may be classed as one for this purpose.

Elections and Jurors Act, 1945

This Act received the Royal Assent on December 20.

REGISTER FOR ALL ELECTIONS.

Section 1 provides that the Annual Register published on October 15 shall apply to parliamentary elections until the next ensuing Annual Register. In other words the Annual Register now applies equally to Local and Parliamentary elections through the year. (This varies the procedure set out in Section 13 of R.P.A. 1945, which provided that the Annual Register should be used for Parliamentary elections from October 1 to December 31, and that for any Parliamentary elections occurring between January 1 and September 9, 1946, that an *ad hoc* register should be specially prepared under the provisions of the 1943 and 1944 Acts.)

QUALIFYING DATE.

Section 2 provides that a one-day qualifying period (June 30) is to be in operation for the preparation of the 1946 Annual Register. This is done by extending Section 1 of the 1944 Act. (Otherwise there would have been a reversion to a two months' qualification under the 1943 Act which would have become operative if the 1944 Act had lapsed.)

SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTER.

Section 3 provides for the publication on February 28, 1946, of a Supplementary Register in which the following two categories of persons eligible for registration will be included:

- (a) Members of the forces, seamen and war workers abroad, whose declarations for registration are received in the period June 30 to December 31.
- (b) Persons discharged from the forces or merchant navy within the same period, and who have received an ordinary identity card.
- (c) Released prisoners of war—in respect of the registration of these persons the supplementary register is to be regarded as the service register for which the qualifying date is January 1, 1946.

This Supplementary Register will be in force for all parliamentary elections initiated after February 28, and for local government elections held after that date; and it will continue in force for these elections until the next annual register comes into force.

EXTENSIONS OF POSTAL VOTING.

Sections 6 and 7 extend postal voting facilities to the following categories:—

- (a) Persons who are resident at an address other than that for which they are registered, provided the two addresses are not within the areas defined in Sections 20 and 22 (2). Such excluded areas are those of contiguous Metropolitan Boroughs, same county or municipal borough, same urban district or same rural parish, and for Scotland the same division of a county or the same burgh.
- (b) Persons who can satisfy a Registration Officer by such evidence as may be prescribed by regulation that they are unlikely to be able to vote in person during the currency of the register in question, either by reason of physical incapacity or in the case of blind persons without assistance.
- (c) Persons appointed proxies by service voters if the registered address of the service voter and the address to which a ballot paper is to be sent are not within the areas defined (as above).

Section 8 continues until December 31, 1946, or to such later date as may be prescribed by regulation, the special arrangements for extended postal voting at a General Election, contained in Part IV of the Representation of the People Act, 1945. Unless so continued these arrangements would have lapsed on December 31, 1945.

The Act is obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2, price 4d.

Labour Party Publications List

PAMPHLETS:

"The Rise of the Labour Party." L.D.S. 1.

"Fair Shares of Scarce Goods." L.D.S. 2.

Post free: 1 copy, 3d.; 12 copies, 1s. 6d.; 100 copies, 10s.

"About The Labour Party," by Morgan Phillips. Post free: 1 copy, 3d.; 12 copies, 1s. 6d.; 100 copies, 12s.

"Ernest Bevin's Work In Wartime."

"Herbert Morrison's Work in the War Government."

Post free: 1 copy, 3d.; 12 copies, 1s. 9d.; 100 copies, 13s.; 500 copies, £3 2s. 6d.; 1,000 copies, £6.

"Plan for Peace," by Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.

"Wings for Peace."

"National Service for Health."

"The Nation's Food."

"Our Land."

"International Post-War Settlement."

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"Social Progress in New Zealand," by the Hon. Walter Nash.

"Let Us Face the Future." Post free: 1 copy 3d., 12 1/9, 100 13/-, 500 £3 2s. 6d., 1,000 £6.

"Coal and Power."

"Post-War Organisation of British Transport."

Post free: 1 copy 4d., 12 2/6, 50 8/-, 100 15/-.

"The Colonies." Post free: 1 copy 4d., 12 2/6, 50 10/-, 100 17/6.

"Rent Acts Guide." Post free: 1 copy 7½d., 6 3/-, 12 5/6.

"Leon Blum Before his Judges." Post free: 1 copy 1/4, 12 10/-, 50 £2, 100 £3 10s.

"Party Organisation." Post free: 1s.

"Conduct of Parliamentary Election." Post free: 2s. 6d.

"Conduct of Local Elections." Post free: 1s. 3d.

"Speakers' Handbook." Post free: 2s. 6d.

"Local Government Handbook." Post free: 1s. 6d.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES:

Pamphlets and Leaflets—Annual Conference Report (as issued) 5/- per year, post free.

The Labour Press Service (issued fortnightly) 5/- per year, post free.

Notes for Speakers (issued weekly) 10/- per year, post free.

Labour Party Bulletin (issued monthly), 2/- per year, post free.

Labour Woman (issued monthly), 2/6 per year, post free.

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